

[2 March, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

lakh per district. The Package involves a total amount of Rs. 16978.69 crore consisting of Rs. 10579.43 crore as subsidy/grants and Rs. 6399.26 crore as loan. District wise break-up of the package is not maintained at the central level. However, the state wise break-up is as under:

Andhra Pradesh	—	Rs 9650.55 crore
Karnataka	—	Rs. 2689.64 crore
Kerala	—	Rs. 765.24 crore
Maharashtra	—	Rs. 3873.26 crore

#### **Relief package for Vidarbha**

\*66. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only a paltry sum has been released, so far, out of Rs. 3750 crores special relief package for six districts of Vidarbha announced by the Prime Minister on July 1, last year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reason for not releasing the package fund as yet?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The Government of India has sanctioned a rehabilitation package of Rs. 3873.26 crore for six districts of Maharashtra in Vidarbha region. This includes both subsidy/grant and loan component. Various items of assistance covered by this amount are ex-gratia assistance from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF), interest waiver, assured irrigation, seed replacement, watershed development, micro irrigation, horticulture development, extension services, and subsidiary income services. As per the available information, an amount of about Rs. 1530 crore has already been released for implementation of the package in Maharashtra. Keeping in view the schedule of implementation of the package, the released amount is satisfactory.

#### **Adoption of G.M. crops**

†\*67. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a state of confusion amongst the farmers of the country regarding adoption of GM. crops;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that the seeds of the above crops are not available throughout the country;

(c) if so, the efforts being made by Government to make agriculture profitable; and

(d) the details of the efforts being made by Government to encourage bio-farming and the details of the achievements made in this regard, State-wise?'

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Bt. Cotton is the only Genetically Modified (GM) crop that has been released for commercial cultivation in the country. The area under Bt. Cotton has increased from 29,000 hectare in Kharif, 2002 to 12.34 lakh hectare in Kharif, 2005, which reflects the acceptability of Bt. Cotton among the farmers. No other GM crop has been released for commercial cultivation.

(b) Bt. Cotton seeds are produced and marketed by private seed companies. According to the information available 38,700 quintals of Bt. cotton seeds have been sold in the country during Kharif, 2006.

(c) For enhancing farm profitability through crop improvement and management, use of Biotechnology and hybrid technology has been promoted through specific projects on aspects such as hybrid technology, development of transgenics and genomics.

(d) There is no scheme on bio-farming. However, a pilot project for production, promotion and market development of organic farming in the country is under implementation.

#### **Death of leopard in Pulwama**

\*68. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a leopard strayed in Pulwama District of J&K on 17th January, 2007 was first injured by bullet shot of Police and later stoned to death by mob in the presence of Wild life personnel;